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Are you a Christian or a Calvinist ?

OR

DO YOU PREFER THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST TO
THAT OF THE GENEVAN REFORMER ?

BOTH THE FORM AND SPIRIT OF THESE QUESTIONS BEING
SUGGESTED BY THE LATE REVIEW OF AMERICAN UNITARI-
ANISM IN THE PANOPLIST, AND BY THE REV. MR.
WORCESTER'S LETTER TO MR. CHANNING.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

SOME STRICTURES ON BOTH THOSE WORKS.

BY A LAYMAN.

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Are you a Christian or a Calvinist?

I EXPECT the intolerant among the disciples of Calvin will be ready to consign a layman to the fate of "*unregenerate reprobates*," who shall dare to intermeddle with the sacred mysteries of their faith. Their master would never suffer any one to question his doctrines under pain of the fagot. He wished to dethrone the pope only that he might put the tiara on his own head. His disciples in *this* country, and in this alone, retain the same spirit. They would have it believed, that the laity are to adopt their faith from them, as they have taken it from Calvin; and the pains and penalties of infidelity and excommunication are now openly denounced against those, who shall call in question any one of the dogmas uttered two centuries ago by an uninspired priest of Switzerland.

If some future historian of the church shall relate, that in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in a country whose constitutions secure the freedom of religious opinion, and require only a general belief of the christian religion, a set of men combined to write down all who ventured to think for themselves, to raise the cry of heresy against those who preferred the scriptures as the rule of their faith to any human creed, it certainly will be deemed incredible. Posterity will require some collateral evidence of the fact. They will search the records of our historical societies, and the alcoves of our colleges, for any controversial writings

which may confirm so improbable a story. It is with a view to furnishing such a document that I write. I do not mean to enter into the subtleties of a theological controversy, which would be unsuitable to a layman, if he were capable of it. The principal end I propose, is to examine our rights, and to put on record this alarming and injurious, and bold attempt to invade them in such a country, and in such an age. It is one of the facts in the history of human nature, that deserve to be noticed.

There is one point in which all parties are agreed, that the christian religion reposes for its foundation on the sacred scriptures contained in the Old and New Testament. Some difference of opinion arises, to be sure, as to the degree of inspiration which the writers of those books possessed ; but in those books, it is admitted, are contained all the rules of our faith and conduct as christians. These scriptures were originally written either in the Greek or Hebrew languages. They were for nearly fifteen centuries unprinted, and were only preserved by manuscripts or written copies. These copies were scattered over the whole world, from Abyssinia to the remotest north, and from Spain to Hindostan.

No two editions, even of printed books, ever would precisely agree with each other, and of course it could not be possible that these manuscripts, in so many languages, and in countries so separated, should be alike ; and it is only by a comparison and collation of many, that any approximation to the certainty of the purity of the text can be obtained.

The present translation in common use in our churches was made by order of James the first, two centuries ago. Its general fidelity and correctness are admitted, but there must be room for improvement. The knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew languages has become much more generally

diffused than it was when that translation was made. Many critical inquiries have since been made into those languages, and more erudition has been displayed since that period than before. New copies of the Bible have been discovered and collated with the old manuscripts. Some errors and many defects, especially in perspicuity, have been found in the translation now in use. One or two most important interpolations have been discovered, and are admitted to be such by all the learned men of Europe of all sects.

The object of this statement will presently be seen. An honest layman, who has no *esprit du corps*, no fear for the power and influence of his sect or profession; who considers religion too sober and serious a thing to be the subject of party feelings and spirit, would naturally say upon such a statement, "It is my duty to get, if I can, the very copies of the scriptures that the authors respectively wrote with their own hands, and to learn the languages in which they are written; and to take as a standard of faith only what I find there written, and not what fallible men have inferred from them." But as he cannot get these originals, and as he may not have time or talents to learn the languages in which they are written, he will take the best translation he can find, and he will naturally infer, that the last one, if executed by learned and pious men, will be the most perfect. As he finds there are faults of great moment in the old translation of the Bible, he will be anxious to attend to and inquire after every improvement. Such ought to be, and such would be, the conduct of every anxious inquirer after truth.

Now let us see what is called orthodoxy in the present enlightened age.

It is contended, that the translation made by order of king James the first, is entitled to the fullest faith. It is regarded by many as inspired, and men are called heretical and wicked, who endeavour to procure a better translation, and desire any alteration in the present English text.

Now what does this involve? Not only, that you believe the apostles inspired, but that every clerk and copyist (whether slave or monk) was also inspired; that even the orthodox men, who made the interpolations to suit their dogmas, were inspired; and that all the bishops and divines who made the translation were inspired. I introduce this point first, because it comes first in order.

The orthodox also maintain, that certain opinions and speculations, not to be found in the scripture, but which Calvin declared he believed were *intended* to be placed there, or *pretended* that he discovered in them, and certain other opinions, held by an assembly of Divines in Great Britain, are to be received as the rule of our faith; however impossible we may find it to understand such doctrines, and even if upon the most accurate examination and impartial inquiry we shall be convinced, that no such doctrines are contained in the scriptures.

The real point, and the only point, of difference between those who are called the liberal clergy and the orthodox, rests on this ground.

The orthodox believe in Calvin and the Westminster Assembly; the liberal christians in Christ and his apostles. The former are Calvinists—the latter, Christians. Yet so intolerant and unreasonable are the party who have arrogated to themselves the title of orthodox, that they venture to deny the name and title of christians to the followers of Christ, and apply it exclusively to the followers of Calvin and of human councils, assemblies, and creed-makers.

Let us take as an example the subject, which has been the occasion of the late attack on the followers of Christ.

Jesus Christ himself was an *Unitarian*. To be sure that particular title was unknown in his day. So explicit was his language, that no man dared during his life to ad-

vance a doctrine so derogatory to his God and father, as the plurality of Gods, or the equality of the Son with the Father.

So far as his conduct, his language, his example and his precepts can have any weight in deciding what was his own relative character, and what were his notions of the unity and indivisibility of God, they fully support the proposition, that he was in the simple sense of the word, *an Unitarian*. He uniformly declares, that all his power, all his authority, all his miracles are derived from God. The form of prayer which he enjoined upon his disciples is purely Unitarian ; that is, it is founded on the idea, that there is but one God over all, distinct from himself or any other created being, and that to him, and him alone, are due adoration and praise.

Dr. Worcester asserts, that the doctrine of the trinity is one of those essential points without the belief of which no man can be a christian. Yet Christ himself, who came into the world for the sole purpose of revealing to man the will of God, has studiously concealed from us any such doctrine ; nay, he has led us to believe by repeated and express declarations, that he was in every respect distinct from and inferiour to the God and father who sent him, and whose messenger he declares himself to be. It is then because Dr. Morse and Dr. Worcester know more of the character of God and of our Saviour, than Jesus Christ knew of himself, that we are called upon to believe this incomprehensible doctrine, and to reject and view with abhorrence those venerable pastors, who prefer the authority of Christ to that of these fallible mortals. I premised that I did not intend to enter into the argument upon any of the disputed points. In this I only imitate the Rev. Dr. Worcester and the *charitable* and *polite* editors of the Panoplist. It is not because, though a layman, I am entirely unacquainted with the great points of the controversy, but it is because I think,

if, at this day, argument be necessary on this topic, it is the province of learned men, whose professional pursuits have better qualified them for the task. My object is, simply, to shew that the Panoplist and Dr. Worcester have assumed too much, in asserting that the doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental article in the creed of a Christian.

It would be the greatest reproach to the Deity, to his Son Jesus Christ, and to the gospel which he taught, to suppose, that a doctrine, fundamental and essential to salvation, was not only not directly and plainly enforced in the same perspicuous manner, in which the doctrines of a future state, of charity, of purity of life, are inculcated, but that Christ should have used such a great number of expressions indicating his own inferiority, and the unity of God, which must necessarily lead men astray from an essential truth.

It cannot be denied, that the unity of the supreme God not only is more consonant to enlightened reason, apart from revelation, but that it was the prevailing sentiment of the patriarchs, prophets, and distinguished men, whose lives and opinions are recorded in the Old Testament.

Dr. Worcester insinuates very distinctly, that the doctrine of the gospel, the doctrine taught by our Saviour, the doctrine believed and maintained by many venerable and learned men in Europe and our country, as to the unity of God, is injurious to the character of the supreme Being, is a very different and inferior sort of religion, from that which Calvin and Athanasius, and Morse and himself hold; and that for this reason, no communion ought to be held with such christians.

Let us examine how far this is true, and which party held doctrines the most injurious to the supreme Being, and to his Son, whom he sent into the world to enlighten, to reform and to save us.

In the first place, in regard to the supreme Being. Is it more honourable to his character to assert that his power is divided, that there are three coequal beings in the Godhead, who may be opposed in will, in capacity, in power? In what does this differ from the polytheism of the ancients, except in number? We have dethroned the three hundred gods of Greece and Rome, and we substitute in their place three Gods of our own creation.

In the second place, as to our Saviour himself. Is it honourable to him to contradict the doctrines which he taught? In all his language he was solicitous to exalt the Father above himself. "Not my will, but thine be done." Yet in face of this declaration it is asserted, that they were the same persons, or constituted the same God. If they were the same God, how could the will of the Father be done, and the will of the Son be left undone or unaccomplished?

He also repeatedly declares, that the works which he did, and the miracles which he wrought, were not his own works, but those of the Father who sent him.

I know the metaphysical distinction, which was invented in the ages of scholastick philosophy to reconcile this apparent contradiction, that our Saviour had two natures, one divine and the other human, and that all the expressions of this sort which he uses, refer to his human character. But what an idea does it give of the supreme Being, that he should make a revelation to mankind, founded on the nicest metaphysical subtleties, which would be utterly incomprehensible to the greater part of those who were bound to believe them on pain of eternal damnation?

No. The gospel is no such snare. It is an injurious representation of it. The essential points are taught clearly and distinctly. There is one God, over all, the Father and Creator of the universe. He sent his Son

into the world to announce to mankind the most sublime truths, to seal those truths with his blood. But he commanded him to declare and to teach, as he did, that there is but *one God*, the Father and Judge of all the earth, from whom all blessings flow, whose messenger he was, and upon the acceptance and belief of whose doctrines, men would be accepted by God who sent him. Every thing in this representation is more sublime, more honourable to the supreme Being than in the other. But the idea, that the supreme Governour of the universe, in his proper person, took upon himself the human nature, that he suffered upon the cross, that the Godhead was for a time divided, and part of it was on earth suffering persecution and insult from men, and part in the heavens regulating and governing the world, in addition to its incomprehensibilities, is infinitely derogatory to the greatness and majesty, which we are taught to ascribe to the Maker and Governour of the Universe.

It is a curious fact, but no less curious than true, (and it shews the propensity of mankind to accommodate every thing, even the most sublime doctrines, to their own schemes and party passions) that the general tenour of all the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, has been overlooked and disregarded, and that particular passages, contradicted by their general tenour, have been made the foundation of a creed, which is utterly opposed to the great scope and object of revelation.

If it were possible to burn all the decrees of councils, so often contradictory, so profane, so wicked, such flagrant proofs of the weakness and perversity of men; if all the metaphysical writers and the authority of assemblies could be annihilated and forgotten; if the scriptures could be delivered to mankind unbiassed by authority; if no establishments existed in any country founded on sectarian principles; it is not to be doubted, that the worship of one true God, the Father

and Governour of the universe, would prevail throughout every country, in which the scriptures were read; and due and sublime honours would be rendered to his Son who was made the glorious instrument of revealing these truths to mankind. Men would then be as fearful of placing the Son on an equality with the Father, as he himself was. They would be contented to assign him a place at his right hand, as the first and greatest of created beings who had appeared in this world. They would view him as their kind and beneficent Saviour and Mediator, but they would shudder at the thought of enthroning him with the awful but beneficent God, the almighty Maker and Governour of the universe.

We all know the lofty ground, upon which the Calvinists maintain their doctrines, and we equally know the weakness of that foundation. It rests upon what they are pleased to call the authority of councils and assemblies, or as they style it, the uninterrupted opinions of the venerable reformers and of the ancient churches since the reformation. This authority is the same upon which reposes the infallibility of the Romish church. The doctrine of transubstantiation has this same basis, and is not lest plausibly supported by scripture. The points upon which the reformers differed from the ancient church, are not more clearly or satisfactorily proved, than are the opinions upon which the Lardners and Watts's and Paleys have ventured to dissent from the Calvinistick school. But when it is recollected, that till within the last century, faith was settled by ecclesiastical authority, and heresy was punished with flames; when it is known that to this day, dissent, with respect to the clergy, is followed even in England with expulsion from the church, and to all with many civil disabilities; and that in our country similar penalties have been inflicted on those who ventured to prefer the gospel to the Assembly's Catechism, or our Saviour as their leader to Calvin, wise laymen, who do not

minge in theological controversies, will not attribute much weight to the antiquity or prevalence of certain dogmas.

We agree with Dr. Worcester, and we are happy to agree with him in some points, that south of Massachusetts there is very little freedom of religious opinion. Men must think as they are bid, not as they believe.

Those men in all countries who pursue the clerical profession are generally poor. They rely on the hierarchy or governing party for their patronage and recommendation. In Europe, and even in England, such is the superior splendour of the established churches, so poor and humble, though firm and resolute are the dissenting societies, that it requires something of an apostolical firmness to resist the temptation of conformity.

In our own country, till within fifty years, the same spirit of intolerance had choaked up the channels of free inquiry. But if the scriptures should ever get to be popular, if they should ever attain to a fair equality with the creeds of the Westminster Assembly, and rival in some degree the dogmas of Dr. Morse, and the decisions of Dr. Worcester, we should have very little doubt that Christ would soon become the leader instead of Calvin, and the Bible take the place of the Assembly's Catechism. This day we feel to be distant. We know that there are some determined spirits, that are resolved to stand by their peculiar doctrines, rather than those of the gospel. They are induced to do this, partly because mystery and passion, and their peculiar tenets, recommend them to the common class of hearers. The Sybilline oracles owed a great portion of their authority to their incomprehensibility. The teachers of a doctrine which the hearers do not understand, are supposed by them to have supernatural gifts. This idea is encouraged, and kept up, and we could not notice but with a smile the comparison seen by the Rev. Dr. Worcester, between him-

self and friends, and the early apostles. He and his party, he thinks, are as much entitled to decide authoritatively upon the scriptures, as were the men upon whom the Holy Ghost descended, though they have not the power of confirming the truth of their doctrines by miracles. Hence, that very reverend gentleman treats with much levity and wit Mr. Channing, whose character is truly apostolick, though he pretends to no inspiration.

I shall hereafter notice the unfairness with which the letter of Mr. Channing is treated; but at present I shall confine myself to the point in question, how far an acquiescence in the doctrines of Calvin is a proof of their correctness. It is known that the English divines adopted them, and the thirty-nine articles are partly founded upon them. That church also adopts the Athanasian creed, and still continues it in its formula. There is not a congregation in Massachusetts or Connecticut which would not shudder at its recital, nor is there a clergyman in either state who would dare to repeat it from his desk.

If then all men in this country agree to renounce, as too horrible for utterance, one portion of the orthodox creed sanctified by the usage of many centuries, to what amounts the boasted authority of the Westminster confession of faith?

In Massachusetts, the prevailing opinion is perhaps yet Calvinistick, and so thoroughly have the disciples imbibed the spirit of their master, that they will permit no straggling partizans, no wavering opinions. They must swallow Calvin and all his works as the test of their orthodoxy, or they are denounced as hereticks. Those who doubt, or are even moderate and candid, are damned. The *Panoplist*, alluding to these unhappy victims of moderation and christian feelings, says, "There are others too, who are too *modest* and *unassuming* to preach or act decisively, because *for-*

sooth they are not *satisfied* about *certain controverted* points. Let such persons abandon the office of teaching and return to their studies till they *are* satisfied."

We have seen insolence in all its forms. We have seen the quintessence of tyranny in the person of the late emperor of France, but never did we meet with an example of such arrogance.

Do the clergy of Massachusetts, Calvinistick or Arminian, Arian or Hopkinsian, mean to encourage *such* sentiments? Can there be a more honest or honourable reason for forbearing to touch controversial points, than that a man is not satisfied about them? The editors of the Panoplist virtually recommend to such men who conscientiously have scruples, to quit their livings, abandon their families, and go to Andover (for that must be the meaning) to get indoctrinated.

Suppose a candidate of this school settled with a full conviction of Calvinism, having obtained the certificate (which they are so eager to withhold in case of conscientious scruples) should change his mind, or at least have doubts excited, what is this advice?

"You have had all the learning which Professor Stewart could infuse into you, you have all the grace and goodness and unction which Dr. Morse could communicate, yet inasmuch as you have *doubts*, as you are 'too modest and unassuming' to preach Calvin against Christ and against your own conviction, you must turn your children into the streets, and come back to Andover to be reinstated in orthodoxy?"

Great and benevolent God! Jesus, thou gracious and divine Master! Is this the religion which you intended to inculcate? The *confident* and *assuming*, the immodest and impudent *only* can retain their stations as teachers of your divine religion, but the "modest and unassuming," those who have conscientious scruples about admitting the

fargon of men who have disgraced your name and your religion, are to be discarded from the ministry!

It is not in Massachusetts alone that the works of persecution and intolerance are wrought. The lay part of the community have suffered themselves to be enthralled in every part of the Union. No man has a higher respect for the clergy than we have, but we fear they are undermining their own influence, and giving power to their adversaries by this intolerant conduct towards one another. We shall not allude to the cases which we all have known in *Connecticut*, in which good men were driven away from their flocks, on account of maintaining evangelical doctrines against the creeds and opinions of men.

But this we must state. An orator at one of their publick exercises before commencement, most distinctly recommended the study of the classicks, and urged it on the ground, that they were more sedulously perused in a sister college, (meaning, as we believe, at Cambridge) and that this knowledge was there perverted to the purposes of "*infidelity!*" There is something so unchristianlike in a sentiment of this sort, so utterly unfounded and notoriously false, that it requires all the charity which the gospel enjoins to forgive it.

It is the more unjust, as they knew at that time, that our university had recently sent forth the most learned and able work in defence of christianity, by a young man since elected to a professorship in our college, that America had ever produced.

They knew then, and they know now, that for zeal for the truth and authenticity of the scripture, for respect to the christian religion, and for ardour in its dissemination, the University of Cambridge yields to no seminary in our country.

No. It was a sentiment derogatory to the orator, and equally so to those, who, I am grieved to say, approved it. It was a sentiment arising from an unworthy spirit of rivalry and jealousy, a narrow feeling of religious prejudice. The officers of the college at Cambridge were to be charged with *infidelity*, for not bowing to the authority of the orthodox formula, and yielding obedience to the rescripts of the Calvinistick papacy. Never did a sentiment injurious to any other college, escape from the lips of any student at Cambridge in a publick exercise. We know too well what we owe to our own dignity ; and whatever the emissaries of that, and of other colleges, settled in our state, may do to irritate us and to build up their own seminaries ; however zealously they may work to weaken our institution, and propagate calumnies to render our Alma Mater odious, we shall abstain from recrimination. We confide in the just and equitable feelings of our people, that they will never permit the tongue of slander to alienate their affections from an establishment, which has been the great and best source of blessings to our country, and which was never better administered, nor upon principles more truly christian, than it is at the present moment.

Considering then, that non-conformity to the dogmas of the church has in most ages and in most countries been punished with death, and in all with the loss of publick reward, it would seem to be no very powerful argument in favour of any tenets, that they had been maintained for a great period of years and by very respectable divines.

Even in our own country, the Review in the Panoplist now in question, and the letter of Dr. Worcester, afford pretty strong proofs of the danger of dissenting from prevailing creeds. Our venerated clergymen, to be sure, are not carried to the stake, but they are scourged with thongs of scorpions. These orthodox gentlemen, as if *ex Cathe-*

dra, have issued their bulls of excommunication, and (what I believe the bulls did not usually contain,) all the malignity of caustick wit is exerted to render the excommunicated odious and detestable.

Yes. I will not except Dr. Worcester from this charge, though he flatters himself he has concealed the gall under a cover of honey.

When I read the Review in the Panoplist, I asked myself, what honourable or even honest end do these gentlemen propose to themselves?

Is it the advancement of God's glory, and the maintenance and spread of truths which they deem important?

They have certainly a strange way of effecting their design. Is God to be glorified by an exulting, haughty and insolent triumph over brethren who are in error?

Does the glory of God require, that the most shameful and gross misrepresentations and perversions should be used to excite and prejudice the publick mind against the victims of these holy gentlemen's wrath?

Upon whom, and in what manner was this Review and Dr. Worcester's voluntary, and, as I shall shew, most unhappy defence of it, intended to operate?

Are they intended for the benefit of the pretended culprits, the hereticks themselves? Is it believed that Mr. Channing, and Mr. Thacher, and Dr. Kirkland will be convinced or reformed, or, if they please, frightened, by this denunciation? Had they so little knowledge of human nature as to think, that detected calumny would not finally redound to the honour of the calumniated? Or did they hope to sow discord among their respective parishes! Did they encourage the malignant expectation, that they should excite distrust among the members of their churches, infuse a little gall where nothing but nectar had flowed, produce bitterness instead of love, lessen the veneration and affection almost

unexampled, which the citizens of Boston entertain, and justly entertain, for their pastors, and diminish their salutary, I had almost said, divine influence, over the lives and morals of their people? Or did they encourage the still prouder thought, that by their eloquence, so *tenderly*, so *fairly*, and so powerfully exerted, they could utterly uproot these gentlemen in the esteem of their friends and flocks, and suddenly convince them, that they had been nurturing in their bosoms a set of hypocrites, of infidels; men who, under the guise and garb of religion, had been secretly undermining their dearest hopes, and blighting the fair fruits of religion in their hearts? Did they hope to make their respective parishioners believe, that Lathrop and Channing, and Lowell and Thacher were men of deceit and artifice, making their religion a mere cloak to serve the cause of infidelity, and that Dr. Morse was the only man in the vicinity true in the "faith once delivered to the saints," and full of charity and good works? I appeal to the feelings of all the persons who have so long known these venerated clergymen, whether they can believe that such was the object of the Panoplist and Dr. Worcester? Do you think, my brethren, they aimed at your conversion and salvation, when they plunged the dagger into the hearts of your pastors and friends?

But perhaps Dr. Worcester will say, "this is declamation and an appeal to the passions," as he has said of Mr. Channing's letter.

And pray, if a man calls you a murderer, or an adulterer, when you are without stain, and does not condescend to reason or argue, what course have you, but to appeal to your known character? and does the gospel or any other code of morals require, that you should be so lukewarm as to appear indifferent to your own reputation? How much more then is zeal, and honest ardour commendable in the

defence of our friends whom we have long known and justly value!! Yes! I am ready to acknowledge that any doctrine which would compel me to believe that Dr. Morse was a saint and Mr. Channing a sinner, that the first was acceptable to God, while the other was the object of his wrath, that the former was the friend of Jesus and the latter his foe, I should for that reason *ALONE reject*. I should do it on just grounds. For I should say, "my reason may be fallible, arguments may deceive me, but experience cannot. I know Mr. Channing to be practically the admirer and follower of Jesus. I am not so well convinced as to his accusers." I know it is a short way of reasoning, but for a layman it is safer than to enter into all the subtleties of the schools. I say therefore, Dr. Morse may be a better Calvinist. He might perhaps contend more zealously, and be more ready to burn Mr. Thacher as his master did Servetus, but I doubt whether he is a better *christian*; that is, I doubt whether he has a greater love for Christ, or is more disposed to obey his precepts.

I will own, that I have derived actual and great light from this Review and Dr. Worcester's letter, as to the respective merits of the Calvinistick and Christian parties.

I find the former intolerant, disposed to slander and backbite their brethren. I find, under colour of great zeal for the cause of religion, they indulge the most malignant passions, passions which our Saviour most explicitly condemned.

I find the whole temper and tone of the Review calculated to shew their triumph over their opponents, whom they thought they had got in their toils.

If all the orthodox have these feelings, if they support and countenance this work and indulge such a spirit, we shall for the future understand what orthodoxy means. We shall understand it to be a sect, violent in its passions,

intolerant in its principles, and utterly regardless of the means by which its purposes are effected. I look upon it, that the good and candid of that party are bound to come out openly, and separate themselves, lest they be confounded with these men who have undertaken officiously to represent them.

One thing is certain, that if the principles and spirit of the Panoplist are to prevail with all whom it professes to represent, a new and more dreadful schism must take place in the church than has disgraced it for many ages, and the cause of religion must suffer, for we never shall abandon, through fear of insult and reproach, men the most venerable for their piety and virtues.

I shall now proceed to make a few remarks upon the Review in the Panoplist, and the letter of the Rev. Samuel Worcester, D. D. I shall consider the last work in the first instance, partly because the author has evidently the best faculty of varnishing over a bad cause, partly because he affects, and I am sorry to say (as it appears to me) *only* affects, a superiour degree of moderation; but chiefly because, in considering his defence of the Panoplist, we shall naturally be led to examine the merits of that work. We shall be mistaken if the honest part of society do not say of Dr. Worcester,

Nec defensoribus istis—tempus eget.

The professed object of Dr. Worcester is, to defend the editors of the Panoplist from the charge of misrepresentation, preferred and urged against them by Mr. Channing.

In common life, that is among laymen, we are very much disposed to abhor cunning and prevarication. We think that a good cause does not require it, and that a bad one is not aided by it. When we see a man adhering to the letter and violating the spirit of any rule, we usually call him a

Jesuit. We say that such a man may be a good special pleader, an adroit pettifogger, but he is not a fair and honourable combatant. In a clergyman such a spirit is considered as peculiarly unworthy. To be sure one religious order, which the general indignation of mankind suppressed in the last century, was accused of this disposition to subterfuge. We should be very much grieved to see the spirit of St. Omer's revived in our country, and especially among those who style themselves pre-eminently the saints.

That Dr. Worcester has attempted to obtain an unworthy triumph over Mr. Channing, on the ground of mere verbal criticism, that he has either misunderstood or misrepresented the general spirit of the Panoplist review, we think will be obvious to all who shall attend to our remarks.

The Panoplist *does* mean to convey the idea, that that portion of the clergy and of liberal christians in our country, who deny the doctrine of the Trinity, are chargeable with all the opinions which Mr. Belsham and the English Unitarians hold. This was the great scope of the work. The whole effort of the Reviewers was directed to fix upon every man in this country, who differed from the Calvinists as to the Unity of the Godhead, all the other peculiar notions and sentiments which Mr. Belsham maintains.

Dr. Worcester resists this charge, by calling upon Mr. Channing to shew any distinct phrase or paragraph, which in itself bears this meaning, and he considers himself as triumphant, because no one sentence taken by itself will bear this construction.

It is well known that the christian world have been from the third century divided on the question of the Trinity. At one time the Arians had the majority throughout all the christian community, and if it had not been for the powerful arguments of fire and fagot, theirs would probably have continued to be the prevailing doctrine of christians. The

Arians denied the doctrine of the Trinity, yet they no more resembled the Socinians in many of their opinions, than the Calvinists do the Hopkinsians, or the Papists either of them. These facts were well known to the editors of the Pano-
plist and to Dr. Worcester, but they knew also that they were unknown to the greater part of laymen. Hence they have both of them, Dr. Worcester full as much as the others, attempted to fix upon all that portion of the clergy, who are not satisfied with the doctrine of the Trinity, all the opinions maintained by Socinus or Mr. Belsham, though they knew the greater part were Arians. I say distinctly, they must have known that these facts were unknown to the great mass of readers, and I am afraid that they were not unwilling that they should be led into error.

The Arians have the most elevated ideas of Jesus Christ. They consider him as a being pre-existent to his appearance on earth ; that he came down from heaven. Many of them believe that he had an agency in the formation of this world. In this manner they reconcile some texts of scripture which seem to give to the Messiah this exalted character.

The Socinians on the other hand consider him as an inspired prophet, but purely human in his origin.

There is a third class, whom Dr. Worcester *ought* to have known, because his liberal and pious brother is at the head of them ; (a man, who for his ingenuousness and generous sacrifice of himself in the cause of what he believed the truth, is worthy of all praise,) who hold a third opinion ; and that is, that our Saviour, though not a part of the Godhead, is veritably the Son of God.

It is not within our scope to discuss the merits of either of these opinions, but we do say, that, knowing these distinctions to exist, it was very little short of culpable unfairness, both in the editors of the Review and Dr. Worcester, to affect to confound them.

It is then my design to shew,

Firstly. That the sentiments of Mr. Belsham are in fact imputed so generally, and with such purposed vagueness, to those the orthodox call the liberal party, as to lead all honest laymen, unacquainted with these distinctions (that is, ninety-nine in an hundred) to believe, that all Unitarians agree in all points with Mr. Belsham.

Secondly. That the Review does charge the ministers, who doubt the doctrine of the Trinity, generally, with base and hypocritical concealment of their opinions.

Thirdly. I shall shew, that Dr. Worcester himself is under a great mistake, or has been guilty of a still greater degree of misrepresentation, in regard to the preaching and course of conduct of what he calls the liberal clergy.

I would observe here, before I cite my proofs, that it is as unfair in these gentlemen, to attempt to fix on all Unitarians every opinion which any one of them professes, as it would be to fix on all Trinitarians the doctrines professed by any of them.

Yet Dr. Worcester, by a course of reasoning, if it can be dignified with that name, affects to do this.

He chooses to consider all the Unitarians as *one party*. He must have known it to be otherwise. This was not in of our view decorous in a man of his profession.

In page 10 he says, "if among the liberal *party* such things are done, if *some* do mutilate the New Testament, &c. if of the rest some more and others less directly consent to these things, if as a *party* or as individuals of the *party* they bear no decided testimony against these deeds, and do nothing to purge themselves from the guilt of them, then is it not true to say of the *party* generally that they do these things? and will they *not generally* with *all who adhere* to them be held to answer for them at the bar of the righteous Judge?"

God forbid that Dr. Worcester, if such are his sentiments, should ever be promoted to the office of a temporal or spiritual judge. A million of men entertain one opinion in common. Nine hundred and ninety thousand of them hold an opinion perfectly innocent, but ten thousand of them also maintain the most censurable doctrines. The point in which they are agreed is either true or harmless. I would impute, says the humane Dr. Worcester, to the nine hundred and ninety thousand, the detestable doctrines of the ten thousand, which they reprobate equally with the rest of the world.

This is imputation with a vengeance !

Let us, however, test the fairness of this reasoning and the justice of this accusation by an application to them.

So far as it respects this particular point in the nature of God, the christian world are divided into *two* sects only, Trinitarians and Unitarians.

The former term embraces Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and these again are subdivided into fifty sects.

The latter are divided into Arians, Socinians, and many who differ from both.

Now is it not as reasonable to say to a Calvinistick Trinitarian, "Your Trinitarian party (meaning the Catholics) maintain the doctrine of transubstantiation, of absolution, of auricular confession. You are therefore accountable for these opinions."

How unfair would Dr. Worcester deem it, if we should impute to every Trinitarian every absurd opinion maintained by those who agree with him in that doctrine.

Yet on this very flimsy ground, and on this alone, does he impute to Mr. Channing and the other clergy, who hold the simple doctrine of the Unity of the supreme Being, opinions, which *he* considers the most heinous crimes, which in his judgment will condemn them to eternal punishment, and which merit the severest human censure.

I would remark in this place, that although I would here establish the illiberality and misrepresentation of the editors of the *Panoplist*, it is not because I consider it a reproach to any man, honestly to entertain the opinions of Mr. Belsham. In most of the opinions cited by the *Panoplist* I agree with that Unitarian divine. In some I differ from him; and however it may please the apostolick Dr. Worcester to denounce such opinions as *guilt*, I shall ask for his commission from my Maker and my Saviour before I shall allow the validity of his decree.

Yes. Though a layman, I understand and value my religious rights, and in my conscience I have believed ever since I have had understanding to discern the truth, that the greater part of the peculiar doctrines of Calvinism are derogatory to God, in direct contradiction to the doctrines taught by our Master; and though I can never call error *guilt*, I shall always esteem the Calvinistick errors the most unfortunate and dishonourable to the christian system, of any which the metaphysical subtlety of men has contrived, or which their pride and party spirit have induced them to maintain. But although I consider it no reproach, yet both Dr. Worcester and I well know, that on many of the points in question, a great portion of the Unitarians of this country differ as much from Mr. Belsham as they do from Dr. Worcester, and in this view the charge was not only unfounded but extremely unfair.

I can easily fancy, that I see these metaphysical dictators of our consciences sneering at a layman, who has the hardihood to give his opinion about doctrines which they will say he does not understand. How can you, Sir, they will say, pretend to decide on some of the most abstruse points in theology, which it costs us the whole labour of our lives to endeavour to comprehend, and even that endeavour is with many of us unsuccessful? Such will be the private,

if it be not the publick language of these inspired teachers. Yet they hold very consistently at the same time, that though we laymen cannot understand the merits of these questions without much study, though it cost the metaphysical and able Dr. Edwards the labour of a life to display them, yet that every illiterate man is bound to believe them on pain of eternal damnation.*

Never was a doctrine so well calculated to keep the minds of men in fetters to ecclesiastical authority. You must believe because it is incredible; the more incomprehensible, the more certain its divine origin and its truth. "But I do not understand even the *terms* of the proposition." So much the better; it is a proof the mystery is deeper and more holy, and so much the greater your obligation to believe.

Hence it is, we suppose, that some of these Calvinistick gentlemen hold human research in such contempt, and abandon the pain and labour of study to their industrious opposers, to the seekers after truth, the humble inquirers after the religion which Jesus taught. Hence it is, we suppose, that we sometimes see them so devoted to worldly interests, to the publication of profane books (I use profane in contradistinction to sacred) as to render it impracticable for them to devote any reasonable portion of time to theological research. To such men, to all who are greedy of

* Q. Where are true churchmen to be found?

A. Only in the true church.

Q. How do you call the true church?

A. The holy catholick church.

Q. Is there any other true church?

A. No. As there is but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, there is but one church.

Q. Are all obliged to be of the true church?

A. Yes. *no one can be saved out of it.*

The above questions and answers are extracted, not from Dr. Worcester, but from the eighth edition of the general catechism, printed at Dublin, 1811, and revised, enlarged, approved and recommended, not by the editors of the *Panoplist*,—but by the four *Roman Catholick archbishops* of the kingdom of Ireland.

sovereign power over the minds of their people, these Calvinistick doctrines are very convenient. They teach their flocks, that human reason is to be discarded in judging of sacred things, that it was given us only for our every day affairs, but that in things which pertain to our immortal souls, and which affect our eternal happiness, it is an instrument to be dreaded, a faculty to be despised.*

Hence they lay down the Westminster Assembly's confession of faith as the gospel, and by the aid of a few texts, they are enabled to compose what they are pleased to style an evangelical discourse; though its resemblance to the New Testament is perhaps its slightest recommendation.

If a sober, pious, inquiring parishioner should ask them to explain the doctrine of the Trinity, the nature and character and offices of each member of this singular Union, and what was its state when our Saviour was in the tomb and before his resurrection; if they should ask, what Christ could mean by praying to his Father, that the bitter cup of suffering might pass from him, whether he prayed when he knew it was in vain, and whether he prayed to himself who was equally God with the Father; to all these questions the only reply would be, it is a mystery. We know no more about it than you. But if you do not believe it you will be damned, and the editors of the Panoplist and Dr. Worcester will sit in judgment upon you.

The poor man, if his mind is feeble and his spirit very obedient, trembles and obeys; we cannot say *believes*, for belief cannot be affirmed of any thing which is not clearly and fully understood.

Far different and more arduous is the task of those pastors and teachers, who hold their hearers to be reasonable creatures, and that the noblest faculty which God has given

* "When once the doctrine is adopted, that reason is not to be exercised in matters of religion, it becomes almost a point of duty to be as unreasonable as possible."—Christian Observer, May, 1815, p. 276.

to man, is to be employed about the noblest and most sublime subject.

These teachers consider it to be their duty, to give to every man the "reason of the faith" that is in them.

They esteem it a sacred obligation to search the scriptures, to compare all human systems with them, and to adopt these only so far, as after fair and honest and pious research they shall find them supported by the Bible.

Hence these teachers have a much more laborious task, than those who blindly follow Calvin, or any maker of creeds. They would consider it a profanation of the desk to preach doctrines which they themselves could not understand. Their sermons, instead of resembling the treatises of metaphysical divines, are modelled upon that of our Saviour on the mount. They think his example of sufficient authority.

In the beautiful language of Mr. Channing, "we esteem "it a solemn duty to disarm instead of exciting the bad "passions of our people. We wish to promote among them "a spirit of universal charity. We wish to make them condemn their own bad practices rather than the erroneous "speculations of their neighbour. We love them too sincerely to imbue them with the spirit of controversy." This is as true as it is christian-like and sublime. We all know that this is their mode of preaching, and these their motives.

I mean now to shew,

1st. That the sentiments of Mr. Belsham are in fact in the Panoplist imputed so generally, and with such purposed vagueness to those whom the orthodox call the liberal party, as to lead all honest laymen, ignorant of the distinction between the various sects, to believe, that all Unitarians agree in all points with Mr. Belsham.

In the first place, I adopt their own course of reasoning, as against themselves. Both the Panoplist and Dr. Wor-

cester contend, that all the Unitarians are to be considered as *one party*, and are responsible for the opinions and even crimes which *any* of the party commit.

In page 6, having quoted at large Mr. Belsham's opinions, the editors of the *Panoplist* add, "the foregoing quotations are sufficient to give the reader some acquaintance with the religious opinions of leading Unitarians."

The evidence only went to shew the opinion of one Unitarian. The *Panoplist* cites it as proof of the opinion of more than one of the leading Unitarians. Just below in the same page their courage gains ground, and they proceed without qualification in the work of misrepresentation. "Our readers (say they) will excuse us, if for the sake of making a brief summary of doctrines held *by Unitarians* as exhibited in the preceding extracts, we give the substance of the several articles by way of recapitulation."

"Unitarians hold and teach then, That God," &c. &c. here inserting Mr. Belsham's creed.

This in common acceptance, is an insinuation, that all Unitarians hold those opinions. Here they dropped the word "leading."

The sarcastick, triumphant manner in which the whole subject is introduced, the course of argument adopted, such as that they had *secretly* known, and had often advised the publick of what the Boston ministers had *studiously concealed*, that they were at bottom Unitarians, though they artfully concealed it from their parishes and the world, but that happily for the cause of truth, they had discovered the means of bringing this more than popish plot to light; all this course of statement, as it is applied to the Boston and other clergy of the liberal party generally, *without any discrimination*, was intended to convey, and does convey to the mind of every reader, that they considered it applicable to all. It was purposely vague, that the suspicion

might fall upon the whole. Mr. Channing has disappointed them. He has proved that a part of what they would impute to him as guilt, he claims as merit, and that the insinuation, the innuendo, that all the liberal clergy hold the opinions of Mr. Belsham, is false.

Do these gentlemen believe, that in order to convict them of a libel, it is necessary they should use a precise form of words? Do they believe, they can make insinuations in language purposely obscure, and when put upon their trial, escape on the ground of literal variation?

What will be said to this phrase?

“Such is the Unitarianism which Mr. Belsham wishes to propagate, and of which he professes to write the history, so far at least as it relates to its progress in this country. Of the existence of *such Unitarianism* in the metropolis of New-England, our readers have been generally well persuaded, but some have not believed that it was making considerable progress, because they could not persuade themselves that men, occupying important places in church and state, and standing high in publick estimation, were capable of concealing their true sentiments.”

I do not know that Dr. Worcester might not attempt to prove that the foregoing sentence did not contain any charge, since he could not see even in the *Panoplist* a charge of hypocrisy against the Boston clergy, but I understand the above to be an averment, that *such Unitarianism* as Mr. Belsham wished to propagate, and contained in the summary above cited by the *Panoplist*, was the same with that held by all the men in church and state in Massachusetts, (who were Unitarians at all) and that they concealed, from a sense of guilt and shame, their opinions from the publick.

Such any fair jury would say was the meaning of the sentence. Such Mr. Channing thought it to be, and supposed it included him and his brethren. Such it was intended to

be, as I shall prove, and such Dr. Worcester ought to have supposed to be its meaning.

In the 2d page of the Panoplist Review the term Boston "and its vicinity" is used in such a manner as fairly to bear out Mr. Channing's inference. Nay, it would lead foreigners, and citizens unacquainted with the facts, to consider the whole town and vicinity Unitarians of Mr. Belsham's sort.

So much so, that if any Boston minister, however orthodox, should travel without a passport from the faithful, he would be in danger of being confounded with the hereticks.

"The pamphlet before us (say the editors) furnishes most decisive evidence on the subject of the *state of religion in Boston and the vicinity*. It is evidence which can neither be evaded or resisted by the *liberal party*."

We now introduce one of the passages quoted by Mr. Channing. "We shall feel ourselves (say the Reviewers) warranted hereafter in saying that Unitarianism is the *predominant* religion among the ministers and churches of Boston."

On this sentence the Rev. Dr. Worcester with wonderful shrewdness remarks, 1st. that this does not include the vicinity. But the other one I quoted above, did. 2d. It did not include the "*great body of liberal christians*." But it included the ministers of Boston and their churches; nay, its fair signification is, that the greater part of all the churches were Unitarians, and the sentence I have quoted did include the liberal party. And, 3dly, he says, it does not say that they were Unitarians in "Belsham's sense of the word."

But I have shown above, that in many other passages to the American *Unitarians generally* are imputed Belsham's opinions; so then, if in any one sentence all the propositions cannot be found, our metaphysical divine cannot find

the assertion supported. To such a mind we can readily forgive any errors founded on metaphysical or scholastic subtleties. There is one other evasion which the Rev. Dr. Worcester invents for the word *predominant*, which I notice for other purposes. He says that it might have meant predominant in "influence," having the "most prominent characters" for supporters. There are two sentences in which this word is used by the Reviewer. The other one is, "We feel entirely warranted in saying, that the predominant religion of the liberal party is decidedly Unitarian in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word." Is there a man of plain sense who believes that the Reviewers meant thence simply to assert that the men of influence, the men who have the care of the college, alone, were Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word, or did they mean that it was the prevailing sentiment, the sentiment of the greatest number? Surely the latter is the fair construction; but this construction was introduced, I fear, for the purpose for which, in too many orthodox publications, the same sentiment is inserted, to play off the passions and jealousies of the uninformed classes of citizens against the higher. Gentlemen, you take this course frequently. You are provoked that so vast a proportion of the opulent, well-informed classes of society are scriptural christians, and reject the creeds of the dark ages, the shreds and patches left upon our religion by the first reformers, and you wish to render them objects of jealousy. You may succeed in this game. You have, we well know, the long end of the lever. The multitude will finally govern; but recollect, that in pulling down scriptural christianity, in revenging yourselves upon us for rejecting your authority and preferring that of Christ, you run some hazard of being pulled down yourselves. Some of the best friends, and the most staunch supporters of christianity are among those whom you attack. Infidelity is the prevailing profession of

the statesmen of the south. The populace in times of turbulence soon pass from orthodoxy and fanaticism to incredulity, and you may regret too late, that you alienated the affections of those who were willing and able to aid and sustain you, while you lost your influence with the other classes. I shall say something more on the causes of the late unusual awakening and zeal, and this dreadful apprehension of danger to the church, in the close. I shall suggest some of the true sources of this clamour, and shall render it probable, that if two or three turbulent and intriguing men had not been encouraged, the harmony of the church would not have been interrupted. To return to our question.

The best proof and the conclusive one against the Panoplist editors, is the judgment which they pass on themselves. Their conscience smote them, and it is astonishing to me that Dr. Worcester did not see that his defence was officious. They never mean to deny, and they never can deny, that they imputed to the whole liberal party, in town and out of town, men of influence and men without it, ministers and people, the opinions of Mr. Belsham. In page 27 they say, they are aware they shall be accused of unfairness in imputing to the liberal party "the extravagant opinions of Mr. Belsham." But they justify it. They go on to argue on the honourable nature of Mr. Wells' standing and character, and his consequent authority.

This is a perfect admission, not that they were unfair, but that they *did* so impute the opinions of Mr. Belsham to the liberal party.

Now what have we proved that the Panoplist asserted?

1st. That Mr. Belsham's opinions are those of "leading Unitarians."

2d. That they are the opinions of "Unitarians" without qualification.

3d. That "Unitarians" hold *all the opinions* which the Panoplist selects from Mr. Belsham's creed.

4th. That the Unitarianism which has been secretly spreading in Boston, and of which they had often warned their readers, that which was held by men distinguished in church and state was "such Unitarianism" as Mr. Belsham's.

5th. That Mr. Belsham's book applies to the "state of religion in Boston and its vicinity."

6th. That Unitarianism (which we have shewn they had before defined to be Mr. Belsham's) was the predominant religion of the ministers and churches of Boston.

7th. That the predominant religion of the liberal party is decidedly Unitarian in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word.

And lastly, they implicitly admit, that they did charge the liberal party with holding Mr. Belsham's opinions, and justify it.

Let us now see, whether the whole of Mr. Channing's assertion in his first proposition, and especially the one I advanced, is not supported; viz. that the Panoplist asserts, that the ministers of this town and its vicinity, and the great body of liberal christians, are Unitarians in Mr. Belsham's sense of the word.

Dr. Worcester not only has failed to defend them successfully on this point, but he has most unhappily plunged himself into the same difficulty, by justifying in one line what he denied to exist in a preceding one.

It is where he defends this malicious sentence of the Panoplist, "the liberal party mutilate the New-Testament, reject nearly all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and degrade the Saviour to the condition of a fallible, peccable, and ignorant man."

Dr. Worcester first attempts to shew, that it does not mean the whole party; that the whole is sometimes used for

a part, that it was therefore wrong in Mr. Channing to apply it to all of them. He has scarcely finished this piece of fine reasoning, before he proceeds in three long pages to shew, that every one of the party are liable for the deeds of every other one ! That the Reviewers had a right to consider Belsham's opinions as applying to all Unitarians since he spoke in the name of all ; thus the doctor exhibits a new species of reasoning. He denies a fact, supports his denial with much argument, and then proceeds to justify that fact as an acknowledged and admitted one.

The Calvinists certainly will do us a favour by selecting Dr. Worcester as their advocate, but we sincerely rejoice that he is not on our side of the question : we could not stand such a defence, though we fear no attack from any quarter.

The second point is, " Did the Reviewers in the Panoplist charge the clergy or ministers, who doubt the doctrine of the Trinity, with base and hypocritical concealment of their opinions ?"

Here Dr. Worcester is a little more cautious. He deals in general denial, he brings forward but one passage, which I shall examine : But he does make one or two assertions that astonish me. One is, that of all the quotations made by Mr. Channing, he thinks "*he may safely assert there is not one sentence or scrap of a sentence which appears in the letter of Mr. Channing, with the same aspect and bearing as in the Review.*" This charge, if true, goes deeply to the moral character of Mr. Channing ; but it is utterly unfounded.

It will appear to be one of the most singular mistakes or misrepresentations by clerk or layman. It is distressing to be obliged to apply such expressions to a divine, but if a man will fight with poisoned arrows, he must expect to be treated as out of the pale of civilized warfare. The facts

I am now about to state, and the exposition which I am about to present, will be thought to bear still harder on the fairness of Dr. Worcester as a theological combatant.

If that reverend gentleman intended, in the manner of some of the subtleties I have so fully detected above, to justify his assertion by saying, that after these sentences and scraps of sentences were transferred to Mr. Channing's letter, they did not stand in the same typographical order or relation to each other, and to the context in the Panoplist, let him enjoy his triumph, such as it would be. But if he meant, as he did, to convey the idea, that those sentences, and parts of sentences, were not correctly applied by Mr. Channing, I shall prove it to be otherwise.

The "aspect and bearing," and the only "aspect and bearing" which they have in Mr. Channing's letter, are expressed in three short words, "We are accused;" and if we examine the text which was the occasion of introducing this note, we shall find, that the persons to whom Mr. Channing refers as accused, are the ministers of Boston and the vicinity, and others of the liberal party. Now if the ministers of Boston are distinctly accused of all the things stated in the extracts, then the aspect and bearing are the same in Mr. Channing's letter as in the Review, for they are a part of the persons accused, and a part stand for the whole. See Dr. Worcester and the Panoplist *passim*.

We are accused, says Mr. Channing, of the "systematical practice of artifice." In page 2d of the new edition of the Review, there is the paragraph cited below. I shall in every instance give the whole context in order to convict the reverend Dr. the more fully. After asserting that the editors of the Panoplist had long known and often apprized the christian world of this dark secret, Unitarian defection, they say, "But as the work of error was carried on for the most part in *secret*, as many well-meaning people were

led in the dark, and as proselytes were made principally by suppressing truth, rather than by explicitly proposing and defending error, it was a difficult matter so to expose the evil, as to present its character, extent and design in full view, before the eyes of its friends and enemies." [Here follows the clause selected by Mr. Channing.] "It has been an *artifice practised systematically* by a majority of the clergymen who have led the way in this apostasy from the faith of the Protestant churches, and (as we believe we may safely add) in this apostasy from christianity, to inculcate the opinion, that they did not differ materially from their clerical brethren through the country."

Now we ask whether the words, "artifice practised systematically," taken in connexion with the rest of the Panoplist and with the contrast of the word *country*, do not apply to the Boston clergy. Whether they are not as clear as if they had named Lathrop and Channing, and Thacher, and others? There are but two evasions I can think of. One is, that Mr. Channing says, "we are accused of the systematical practice of artifice," and the Review only says, "an *artifice practised systematically*."

To be sure, laymen would call this a quibble, but as it is in character with some other parts of Dr. Worcester's letter, and as it is on such verbal niceties that many of the Calvinistick errors repose, I should not be surprised to see him resort to it.

It may also be said, that the Reviewers do not accuse all the Boston clergy, nor even all who have led the way in this pretended apostasy; neither does Mr. Channing say they did. He only says, "*we* are accused," and surely all the Anti-Trinitarian clergymen are accused, except Dr. Freeman, who is praised, and who *alone* is praised, for his openness.

Case 2d. We are accused, says Mr. Channing, of "hypocritical concealment." In the first place, in page 7, new edition, the Panoplist says, that their readers had long been apprized of the existence of *such* Unitarianism (which I have proved to be Belsham's) in the metropolis of New-England, (this fixes the locality) "but some have not believed (they add) that it was making considerable progress, because they could not persuade themselves that men, occupying important places in church and state, and standing high in publick estimation, were capable of concealing their true sentiments." This is only, I admit, very broad insinuation, but it serves to connect other charges, by shewing that they were designed to apply to the Boston clergy. I dare say the doctor would justify this species of calumny, by saying, that it makes no assertion.

In page 10, the Reviewers say, that Belsham has *shewn* us, not that he has merely *asserted* it, "that many of his order in our country would have one religion for the vulgar and another for the wise, that it is a fundamental maxim among the *great body* of leading Unitarians *here* not to expose their sentiments directly to the inspection of the world at large, and to challenge investigation, but to operate in secret."

I introduce this to shew the same general design, and also that the charge is made against the whole body.

All these extracts are produced as introductory to the following in page 11, speaking of the society in Tremont street (King's chapel.) We must say (say the Reviewers) that the conduct of this society and of their minister, in coming out openly and avowing their sentiments to the world, is vastly preferable to an *hypocritical concealment of them*.

This is a slander by innuendo. It means that other societies did hypocritically conceal. But the Rev. Dr. Wor-

cester triumphs here. He says, there is not a direct charge. He quotes it as far as I have now done ; but who will ever believe without consulting the book, that this divine, who charges his brother Channing with mutilation, took this extract and left the words which immediately follow ? “ Had *other societies* followed their example, we should long since have known with whom we were contending, and not have been obliged to guard against ambushes instead of combating in the open field.” Which those other societies were, is made known by the above extracts from pages 7 and 10, and from the whole tenour of the Review. The other societies in Boston, who are not Trinitarian in their sentiments, are then charged with “ hypocritical concealment,” and *a fortiori* their pastors are so charged, who are more than ten times distinctly noticed in the Review.

Case 3d. We are accused of “ cowardice in the concealment of our opinions,” “ of cunning and dishonesty,” “ of acting in a base hypocritical manner, a manner at which common honesty revolts ;” “ a manner incompatible with fidelity and integrity.”

I put all these distinct cases together, because they are supported by the same evidence.

Speaking of Mr. Wells’s letter, page 20, the Reviewers say, that his apology for his cautious brethren, sufficiently indicates his views of their conduct in regard to their *publick teaching*. This shews of whom they considered him to be speaking, that they were ministers, publick teachers. They then proceed, “ Thus it is, and thus it has been for years. Knowing that the cold skepticism of Socinianism cannot satisfy the wants nor alleviate the woes of plain *common sense* people, its advocates in general have not *dared* to be open, (here is the cowardice.) They have clandestinely crept into orthodox churches by forbearing to contradict their faith, (this shews who are intended—that it

is the clergy) and then gradually moulded them by their NEGATIVE preaching, to the shape they would wish." In the same paragraph and in the same allusion, again, " Who does not see that there is great *cunning*, and that there is great policy in all this. [Here the charge of cunning is advanced.] " But then, the honesty ! That is another matter. Did the holy apostles act in this manner when they preached to Jews and heathens ? Did they teach by negatives ? [This shews they mean the persons above referred to.] Let those blush, who profess to follow the apostles, and yet behave in this base, hypocritical manner. Common honesty revolts at it. The idea, that a *minister* believes the truths of the gospel to be of infinite importance, and still conceals them, is incompatible either with fidelity or integrity."

It makes one blush, to feel obliged to prove so self-evident a proposition, as that these charges were made against Mr. Channing and the Boston clergy. It makes us blush still deeper, to find any persons with the christian name capable of writing such language ; and we shudder when we perceive that any man could affect to doubt their intended application.

But if Dr. Worcester had confined himself simply to a denial of the charge, if he had even gone no farther than to charge Mr. Channing with false and unfair quotations, he would not have sunk so much in our esteem. But there is an affectation of fairness, and of sentiment, and tenderness, which doubles his condemnation. He says, that when he read these extracts in Mr. Channing's letter, he was excited in regard to the Reviewer, [meaning that he felt angry] and he was surprised, that he had not felt the same excitement when he first read them in the Review. This is a stroke of art, first, to make the reader believe his candour, and that he should have felt very indignant at such charges ;

secondly, To heighten the belief, that the passages in their natural connexion bore no such meaning.

Now what shall we say, when we see that they have the same aspect and bearing in the Review, as Mr. Channing stated them to have?—That his assertion was strictly, literally, and technically true, true in the most rigid construction of law and language, true to learned and true to vulgar apprehension in the hidden and the obvious meaning?

But this is not the worst of the case for Dr. Worcester. He stands self-accused. By saying, that he felt excited, or angry, at the accusations of the Panoplist as stated by Mr. Channing, he implicitly admits them to be calumnies, reasonable causes of offence; and yet this very consistent defender, who felt abhorrent at such suggestions, and denies that the Panoplist made those charges, in the aspect and bearing stated by Mr. Channing, advances in substance the *same charges*, and seems astonished that Mr. Channing should have felt indignant at them. Let us furnish our proofs.

In page 17 he attempts to shew, that the same charges of hypocritical concealment are true, he first cites the authority of Mr. Freeman, Mr. Wells, and Mr. Belsham, and then adds, “you must be apprised that the opinion [that they concealed their sentiments, and *temporized*] was very extensively prevalent, prevalent not only among your adversaries, but also among your friends. Hundreds and hundreds of times have I heard it from various quarters, and never have I heard, as I recollect, the truth of it denied or called in question.”

Again. “I did suppose, that you and your liberal brethren held it as a maxim, that a degree of reserve and concealment, greater or less according to circumstances, was prudent, and justifiable, and praiseworthy.”

And pray, if Dr. Worcester believed all this of them, if he really thought them hypocrites and afraid to avow their opinions, why was he *excited* against the Panoplist, when he saw the charges collected by Mr. Channing?

Will he say, that he did not look upon concealment as any offence, or any breach of duty? He goes on to describe this failure of openness to be the greatest degree of infidelity to God and Christ.

I shall now say a word or two on the third proposition, that the Rev. Dr. Worcester has either mistaken or misrepresented the course of preaching, which Mr. Channing stated, and most clearly stated, to be that of himself and friends. Dr. Worcester, in page 22, chooses to understand Mr. Channing as saying, that he did not introduce *any* great controversial points into his discourses.

Mr. Channing's words, cited at length, and not garbled and mutilated, have a very different "aspect and bearing." "As to that very small part of our hearers, says he, who are attached to the doctrine of the Trinity, while we have not wished to conceal from them our difference of opinion, we have been fully satisfied, that the most effectual method of promoting their holiness and salvation, was to urge on them those *great truths* and *precepts* about which there is little contention, and which have an immediate bearing on the temper and life."

A more delightful and rational rule could not, one would think, be adopted.

What is Dr. Worcester's course as to this sentence? He says, there has been great contention about *all* the great truths of christianity, and therefore against the positive declaration of Mr. Channing, that he does urge certain great truths of the gospel, Dr. Worcester makes the following enumeration. "The doctrines concerning the Saviour's person and character, his priesthood and atonement, his

offices and work ; the doctrines concerning the moral state of mankind, regeneration by the holy spirit, justification by faith, pardon and eternal salvation through the merits of the one Mediator, the resurrection of the body, and the final judgment, "the everlasting destruction of those that obey not the gospel," are subjects of continual and earnest contention among those who profess themselves christians. *These doctrines then, according to your own representation, you and your liberal brethren refrain from bringing into discussion before your hearers."*

This is the last and worst quotation I shall make from Dr. Worcester. He affects to believe, that Mr. Channing admitted, that he never preached concerning the person, character and works of our Saviour, nor the moral state of mankind, nor the doctrines of pardon, nor eternal salvation, nor the resurrection, nor the final judgment!!!

Did he believe it to be so? Even charity can scarcely admit it. Such a course of argument would merit a fine or degradation in a Sophomore, but in a minister of Christ, what are we to say of it? Is it to be understood, that the orthodox clergy generally approve of measures, at which all men of sentiment revolt?

I can only say, that if any religion or any doctrines permit or allow of such proceedings, it is a sufficient reason for rejecting them.

Our disposition to fairness induces us to say, that we have no doubt that the Rev. Dr. Worcester had, in the passage to which we refer, a mental reservation, which entirely reconciled this representation of Mr. Channing's preaching to his own conscience. It is however melancholy to reflect, that theological controvertists often have recourse to measures, which appear to laymen who consider a God of truth as an enemy to subterfuge, very improper. The doctor will doubtless say, "have

there not been violent contentions as to the “nature, “ extent, and degree of future punishments, and the time “and manner of final judgment? Had I not a meta- “ physical and abstract right then to say, though I did not “ believe, that Mr. Channing omitted these points?” I answer without hesitation. No, Sir, you had no right to make an inference which you did not believe to be true. Neither you, nor any man in christendom could believe, that the Boston clergy omit to urge on their hearers the doctrines of final judgment, and punishment. You might presume from what Mr. Channing said, that they did not enter on this doctrine of purgatory, and the specifick nature, extent and duration of punishments at the last day, but neither you nor any one of your brethren, ever believed that they refrained from teaching their hearers, that there would be a day of final judgment, in which men would receive a sentence according to their deeds.

If the liberal clergy have not arrayed the Deity in all the terrors which suit the gloomy imaginations of some men, they have not been wanting in representing him as a just being, delighting in the virtue of his creatures, and justly offended with their vices, and that his rewards and punishments would be proportional to their conduct in this life. God grant, that at that solemn day, all those who have been so forward in censuring others may be able to render as good an account of their stewardship, as those whom they have rashly accused.

I have now completed the design which I had originally in view; which was, to place in *alto rilievo*, in a prominent light, the calumnies of the editors of the Panoplist. I am not certain that those gentlemen will not thank us, for proving their true meaning and design against the defence of Dr. Worcester.

I shall make a few remarks on various miscellaneous heads, all connected with this grand bill of presentment, which the exclusive saints have made against the great body of hereticks, called liberal christians, before that venerable tribunal, the mob, in a language and temper just suited to their court,

THE MOTIVE FOR THIS ATTACK OF THE PANOPLIST,
AND ITS CONSISTENCY.

That in a free country every man has a right to address the people on any topick, which he may think useful, cannot be questioned. He has a strict legal right also to manifest in himself a most diabolical, revengeful temper, and he can escape punishment, if he will make his accusations so vague, as that no individual can prove himself distinctly charged with a moral or legal offence. As in our country it is no crime and scarcely a disgrace, to entertain opinions on religious subjects differing from the majority, so there is no remedy, when any malicious writer shall under cover of the press, charge persons with opinions which they do not profess, or misrepresent and mistake those which they do. But though such slanderers can escape what they deserve, without question, judicial punishment, yet there are tribunals of a higher kind, both human and divine, which they never will escape.

There is a moral court, erected in the breasts of all men of common honesty, to which they are answerable. To this court I appeal, in behalf of those venerated men, who have been shamefully abused.

What authority has Dr. Morse, or Dr. Worcester, or Mr. Evarts, or any body else, over Mr. Channing, and Mr. Thacher, and Mr. Lowell, and their parishioners? Is there any ecclesiastical power in our State confided to them, when both pastor and people agree? We know there is not. But

it is urged, that on so solemn a subject the duty of apostles is paramount to human laws, and that St. Morse, St. Evarts, and St. Worcester, reinvested with the power of the Holy Spirit, which descended on St. Paul and St. Peter, are bound to mount the apostolick chair and excommunicate the hereticks. Grant it. It may soon be too dangerous to deny the authority of these apostles. But it must be admitted, that the glory of God and the advancement of true religion *ought* to be not only the motive, but the end proposed.

It appears to me then that the editors of the Panoplist Review most apparently had neither.

In the first place, its temper is so bitter, so full of sarcasm and levity, that it could not have proceeded from a pure desire to promote the cause of Christ.

In the second place, it was inconsistent; for if these Anti-Trinitarian clergymen had been so ashamed or afraid of their opinions, as to conceal them studiously from their parishes, as the Panoplist contends, the doctrines could spread but very slowly, and it was a proof, that those who held them were not eager to make proselytes.

It seems to shew at least, what Mr. Channing asserts, that though their researches led them to reject the Calvinistick doctrine, they did not think it necessary to direct their publick instructions against these specifick errors; as not involving questions essential, however important. Now to attack these gentlemen, who, as the Reviewers allege, studiously concealed their opinions; to attempt to create a popular impression, that their forbearance on these controverted points is a heinous crime, and thus lay men of their learning and talents under the necessity of defending their alleged heresy, and shewing it to be the real gospel, could not fail to extend the opinions, which, according to these accusers of the brethren, ought to be reprobated and

dreaded; and it shews, that every thing but truth was the object those zealots for orthodoxy.

The gentlemen of this school talk much about their *openness*. They would have it believed, that they are as much more disinterested and honest in religion, than the class of temperate theologians, as they are more forward, and dogmatical, and denouncing. This is claiming too much in all reason, considering how many interested and natural, if not criminal feelings, may be gratified by this vaunted openness. I have no doubt, there are in the ranks of the party, persons of amiable or timid character, whom it costs some struggle with their disposition, and perhaps their conviction, to dogmatize and rail at the bitter rate demanded by the leaders and whippers in of the sect. But with respect to others, especially of the prominent sort, the sacrifice would be in *suppressing*, rather than in publishing their peculiar creed. Shall partisans and champions of a creed and sect, who claim exclusive possession of the truth, who think the distinctions between themselves and others essential, who are able to avenge themselves in this world on those who dissent from them, by holding them forth to the multitude, and fixing the brand of heresy upon them, and who profess to expect to be avenged by the final Judge at the last day, think much of raising their standard, and boast of their *openness*? Having a majority in numbers at least with them, deriving consideration and influence, places in publick seminaries, and pulpits, from their sectarian peculiarities, it does not seem to require any great portion of the spirit of martyrdom to proclaim their faith most loudly.

A SMALL BLUNDER OF THE PANOPLIST.

The truth will sometimes force its way through lips the least disposed to its utterance. Take for example this unfortunate sentence of the Panoplist.

Speaking of the Anti-Trinitarian, or scriptural clergy, who, as they pretend, have gradually by “*negative preaching*,” (I use their very words) moulded their people to the shape they would wish,” [a pretty singular mode, it must be admitted, of moulding men’s minds by negative preaching,]

They add,

“The people after a while, (by the means of this negative preaching, which means *silence* as you will see) *never* hearing of atonement, nor of special grace, or the kindred doctrines, forget that they belong to the christian system, and by and by regard as a kind of *enthusiast or monster* a man who preaches these doctrines.” These are the very words in their true bearing.

Is this the Panoplist? Do my eyes deceive me? Your enemies never said any thing so bad of those doctrines. “The liberal clergy creep silently into orthodox churches, “preach negatively (that is, are silent) on certain contro-
“verted points, the good seed is soon lost, and simply by
“*not hearing* these doctrines, for some time, (that is, “after
“a while”) when they hear them anew they are shocked
“at them, and consider the man who utters them a mon-
“ster!!!”

God forbid that your doctrines should be so bad, gentlemen. God forbid that you should denounce such men as Channing, for disbelieving doctrines, which, you say, even orthodox churches, after a short interruption, receive with horror and disgust.

I do not cite this as affording a triumph. It is a noble sentiment and true. It is a generous and ingenuous confession.

I declare to you, honestly, as a layman, there is nothing, as you justly observe, that so soon bristles my hair with horror as some of the doctrines maintained by the orthodox.

THE REMARK OF THE PANOPLIST, SO TRULY APOSTOLICK,
THAT THE "UNITARIANS PRAISE ONE ANOTHER."

I do not wonder that they are so partial to this sally of wit, it has all the qualities of this production of Attica, except brevity. It is so rare a quality too among the orthodox ! and it is so precisely suited to the solemnity and awful nature of such a subject !

I was convinced, last summer, when the same writer caught this idea, and run it down through several octavo pages, that he valued it too much to let it sink into oblivion. I had no doubt, that, like the murdered Starrett, it would "re-appear." I am not mistaken ; and much as I pity the temper of the editors of the Panoplist, I have yet so much of a christian spirit, that I would not willingly deprive them of the pleasure of repeating this truly Attick jest every year, if I did not owe something to truth.

It is admitted, that certain men who agree in denying the truth or the importance of a particular dogma, and in the excellence of a catholick spirit, do praise one another.

To make this a reproach, (and if it is not a reproach it should not have been introduced, for it cannot be believed that on so solemn a question, as that of the Unity of the supreme God, orthodox men would indulge in ridicule and levity, and wit,) if it be a serious reproach, it should have been accompanied with the proof, that the persons charged denied this praise to others, or that those who were praised, were undeserving of it.

I do not see that any due praise is withheld from the orthodox party. I presume they do not expect us to allow that the superiour *learning*, or *fairness*, or *candour* of some, whom they put forward, is the ground of their selection. Full credit is given by us to the learning and character of the Calvinists. They do not, I conceive, insist,

that their peculiar sentiments shall be acknowledged as the result of their pre-eminent spirit of research, or acquaintance with sacred literature ; neither can we feel obliged to consider their intolerance and censoriousness the effect of their piety and benevolence. I think it quite enough in favour of the best of those persons, who promote division, and awaken hateful passions against honest men for being honest, and preferring the Bible to a formula, to allow their anathematizing spirit to be *consistent* with virtue, but not to be a *part* of it. With regard to others, they cannot claim more charity than they give.

As to learning, we do not deny the metaphysical powers of Edwards and Hopkins, and the ingenuity of Dr. Emons ; and do not dispute the reputed or known abilities of the Andover professors—but that critical learning, which is applicable to the interpretation of the scriptures, and that literature, which serves to illustrate and adorn religious and moral truth, as is well known, has been in very little repute among the high Calvinists in this part of the country. A regard to the credit and influence of the sect, and the effect of their institution, is doubtless causing a change in this respect, and will probably cause an abatement of their bigotry. On the other hand, will it be denied that the praise bestowed on the Unitarians is well deserved ? Will any man question the personal virtue of such men as Lathrop, Channing, Thacher, and the great body of the liberal clergy ?

Our country is too much given to self-commendation I admit. But when the orthodox shall produce such works as the writings of Belknap, or the sermons of Clarke, and Buckminster, and Freeman, and so much learning as is found in Everett's answer to English, we will admit that they are as much entitled to praise. At present we cannot compare Morse's Geographical works, or his sermons, such

as we have seen of them, or even Dr. Worcester's letter, with those respectable productions of our country.

But as to this habit of praising one another, you are extremely disingenuous in not feeling and acknowledging the motive. It is to bear up these victims of your vengeance against your slanders, that such things are said. You are the majority. With all the insolence of conscious strength, and with the malignity of enemies, you are assailing, not their opinions and christian standing only, but their probity in the discharge of their function; and when a friend is induced by your calumnies to speak of them with respect, you call it praise.

How consistent is this course in men, who arrogate to themselves *en masse* all the christianity and all the virtue in the country!! How consistent in men, who sometimes promote to offices of the highest honour those whom they themselves despise, and whom the publick have long since condemned. Let us then hear no more on the subject of the self praise of the Unitarians, until you are prepared to shew that it is ill-deserved. I can see no reason why I should not praise a learned man, because he happens to agree with me, in a doctrine, upon which men of sense, in all ages, where there was freedom of opinion, have been *found prone to agree*.

HARVARD COLLEGE.

A large proportion of the Review in the *Panoplist* is devoted to an attempt to render odious the officers of this institution, and to withdraw from it the confidence of the publick. Aware, however, of the hold it has upon the affections of the people, they have thought it necessary to profess a regard for it.

This is, in truth, rather suspicious. The reputed editors of the *Panoplist*, and authors of the Review, are Alumni of

other colleges, and one or more of them sent into this state, for the purpose of punishing and pursuing the college for refusing to become sectarian. It is remarkable, that almost all the sons of our Alma Mater should be so outdone in filial respect and tenderness by these strangers, whom she never knew ! This *foreign patriotism*, however popular in our country, is attended with some inconveniences. I wish these volunteers in supplying the defects of our mother's own children, had a little different way of shewing their regard. They love her so well, that if she will only give herself up to their views, and cease to consider the peculiar dogmas of their creed as subjects of inquiry and discussion, but will declare them to be first principles, and suffer no liberty upon these points to any of her officers, they will admit, that she is as great a blessing to the publick, as she was in good old times ! These generous keepers of their neighbour's vineyard would have it thought, that there is a great change in the theological character of the college, that is, of its superintendents and officers, within the last twenty years. Every one knows, that for sixty years, at least, this institution has been distinguished as the temperate region of theology ; that the five points, and other points of violent theorists and zealots for orthodoxy, have never been inculcated, and that the Calvinists and Hopkinsians have always considered Harvard College as a place, where a man, instructor or pupil, might refuse to wear their badges without any forfeiture of reputation or influence.

The Panoplist editors and Reviewers admit, that the college has been, in many points of view, the pride and glory of our western world. Its excellent benefactors they allow to have been pious men, and they agree, that it has been the nursery of a long and illustrious train of civil and religious characters. But they omit to state, that the liberal Hollises are amongst its benefactors ; that Mr. Adams, the

president of the United States, and Gore, and Parsons, and Ames, and a multitude of others, who are its present, or have been its late supporters, are ranked in the class of liberal christians. They omit to state, that Clarke, and Belknap, and Osgood, and Porter, and Kirkland, and Channing, and Buckminster, and Thacher, and Norton, and Everett, and others are among its pupils, who have been more distinguished than almost any who preceded them.

They say, we shall resort to a clamour, that the interests of learning are in danger. We shall take no such course. We say that all the charges against our Alma Mater are false. That true religion, pure and unadulterated christianity, is the great object of her pursuit. She maintains, that christianity can be well understood and firmly supported only by diligent, and fair, and impartial inquiry.

The college was originally devoted to "Christ and the church," and at no period of its history did the Christian religion engage there so large a proportion of academick instruction.

At the present day, the study of the christian religion forms the most prominent part. There is, however, no attempt to disseminate Unitarian or any other sectarian principles. The minds of the youth are left to the operation of free inquiry. The books which are taught, Butler, and Paley, and Grotius, are the works of men eminent for their piety, and read and approved in orthodox seminaries.

The Reviewers speak of the munificent founders of *ancient* times. The whole records of the University cannot furnish an example of such a donation, as the late noble endowment for a professorship of Greek; one of the main objects of which is to aid in the critical examination of the holy scriptures.

The donation of the Hon. Mr. Dexter, a man of enlightened mind, and pious affections, for the promotion of the study of Biblical criticism, is also almost unexampled in past times. Of the same character, and meriting equal applause, is the donation of Mr. Parkman for a foundation of a new theological professorship.

The gossiping tales, about the prayers on publick occasions, are worthy of the cause which they are introduced to sustain. It would be unworthy of the defender of the most noble institution in America, to descend to reply to them.

ONE WORD ABOUT THE CONTROVERSY WHICH HAS PRODUCED THIS DISCUSSION.

It would be unpardonable in a layman to leave this question here. He ought to recollect the time, when these scholastick disputes were as little familiar to himself, as they generally are to the great body of laymen throughout our country.

The opponents of true christianity and free inquiry have chosen to deal in general terms, and they rely on general denunciations rather than on reasoning. They raise the cry of heretick and infidel, because they hope it will be as effectual, as that of "church and king" in England.

But they must not be permitted to remain under the almost impenetrable cover of their mysteries and their watch-words.

If our doctrines are heretical, let it be known. If they are scriptural, let them be defended.

I rejoice in this occasion, as it will compel our clergymen to expose the errors, which their aversion to controversy has induced them to spare. The great point which has given occasion to this libel is, that many of our divines,

after deliberate research, do not find the doctrine of the *Trinity* in the holy scriptures. They do not believe, that the great Jehovah hath any copartners in his power. They do not believe, that the great God himself dwelt upon the earth in human shape, and was buffeted and put to death by men. They believe in the *Divinity*, or divine mission, though not in the *Deity* of Christ. They believe, that the Son was what he declared himself to be, inferiour to the Father ; that the works which he wrought, were those of God who sent him. Whilst the subordination and dependence of the Son appear to them undoubted, they agree in the most noble and exalted ideas of the Saviour. They desire to honour him in all the offices he is represented to sustain in behalf of mankind, and believe and acknowledge all respecting his nature and rank, which the scriptures, upon examination, are found to teach. They differ from each other in their conceptions on this point, as the Trinitarians do in their definitions ; but they consider, that these differences, being such as may perfectly consist with the love of truth, ought not to be a ground of denying each other's christianity.

As to the general doctrine of the inferiority and derivation of the Son, they think it every-where taught in the New Testament, and necessarily inferred from innumerable passages. But this their adherence to scriptural religion, and what they suppose declared in Christ's gospel, is regarded as *a crime*, unless they also believe in it, as explained and delivered in words of man's device, by certain ecclesiasticks, transported by the rage of controversy, who lived three hundred years after the death of the Saviour, and in following periods.

Besides the obscure or contradictory statements of the doctrine of the Trinity, which the Calvinists would have us believe, there are other points, for doubting which our

teachers are anathematized, and we their hearers are enjoined to renounce them ; which points I think it would be well should be laid open. It is really important to know whether the scriptures teach such doctrines as these scholastick divines pretend ; because if they do, we must review the evidences of the sacred book, and see if it be possible, that a good and just God can have made such a revelation.

We must believe, they say, *the imputation of the sin of Adam* ; according, however, to the last edition of the doctrine. (For these gentlemen, who call us infidels, for not taking our creed as laid down by the reformers, with whom this doctrine did not come into dispute, or the Westminster divines, have taken the liberty for themselves to new model this article,) we must believe, as I understand them, that God willed the sin of Adam, and moreover willed, as it was formerly, that the guilt of this sin should descend upon all his posterity ; but as it is laid down in the *Improved Version*,* that, in consequence of his disobedience, all his descendants were *constituted* sinners—born with a nature totally depraved, utterly incapable of any act of virtue—but subject for this sin of their progenitor, or the moral impotence which it entailed upon them, to the wrath and curse of God, and the pains of Hell for ever.†

Corresponding to this doctrine of original helpless depravity and guilt, are the doctrines of *irrespective decrees and special grace* ; by which we learn, that some, elected from eternity of mere good pleasure, without any regard to their disposition or character, are the subjects of a special super-

* See creed of the Andover Institution.

† The eternal misery of those dying in infancy, except the children of believers, (*i. e.* Calvinists,) was long considered the necessary inference from this doctrine of original sin. The orthodox now, I believe, are so good as to say, that possibly they may not go to Hell ; or, if they do, it will not be to the *worst part* of the infernal regions.

natural influence, giving them saving faith, a particular exercise towards the Saviour, which orthodoxy seems to put as the sign or the substitute of the whole of duty which secures their admission to Heaven; whilst the other part of the race, and the great majority, incapable of any acceptable act without this grace, which yet God will not give, and which they can neither do any thing, nor even desire nor try to do any thing, to procure, are doomed to eternal wrath.

Then follows the comfortable doctrine of *Saints' perseverance*, which teaches, that having received this grace, they will never lose it; they need not fear being cast off, whatever sins they may be left to commit.

These and other views of religion, contained in this iron system, appear to many laymen as well as clergymen, most false and pernicious, proceeding from a vain spirit of speculation, and the dotage of system, contrary to the general tenour of the scriptures, and supported only by single, detached, and figurative expressions, understood in the gross and literal sense. They appear to us hurtful to general morality, opposed to the true character of God, tending to produce intolerable spiritual pride and bigotry in one class, often the least worthy, and causeless anxiety and tormenting oppression in another; whilst aversion and skepticism towards all religion are often generated by them in the minds of multitudes.

I am glad that these subjects will now be investigated and displayed before the publick.

Much is said about the early reformers, and the faith which they held, and it is made an accusation against the real christians of the present day, that they do not adopt all the opinions of the first reformers. It would be strange indeed, and against all analogy and experience, if these had passed suddenly from great corruptions to the most perfect

light. Some of the early prejudices of their youth and education would adhere to them; and it is an historical fact, that no sooner were they relieved from the thralldom of the Romish church, than they adopted the same spirit of persecution, and maintained the same abominable doctrine of the supremacy of the church, that the Pope had done.

Some however had more catholic ideas, and I shall conclude this essay with the sentiments of the venerable Mr. Robinson, the pastor of the church at Leyden, who were afterwards the founders of New-England. "Brethren, if God reveal any thing unto you, be as ready to receive it as you were any thing by my ministry, for I am *verily persuaded*, I am very confident, that the Lord has more truth yet to break forth out of his holy word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go no farther than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be persuaded to go beyond what Luther saw, and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet *saw not all things*. This is a *misery* much to be lamented. For though they were burning and shining lights in *their* times, yet they penetrated not the whole counsel of God, but, were they now living, would be as willing to embrace still farther light, as that which they first received. It is *not possible* the christian world should come so lately out of antichristian darkness, and that *perfection of knowledge* should break forth at once."

Such were the Catholick sentiments of one of the founders of the New-England church, in the early days of the reformation; and now, when we have had the light of two centuries added to the knowledge which the world then possessed, centuries, in which christianity has been better discussed, and more research has been made in the

scriptures, than in all the ages which preceded them, including that of the Genevan Reformer, we are told by a set of men, who had rather dictate than study, that we must not alter a letter in the creed of Calvin !!!

If any should be disposed to censure the temper in which this vindication is written, they should remember, that we are not the assailants. They should peruse the *Panoplist Review*. They will perceive that it is written with the most unchristian spirit, and is couched in the most offensive terms, of any writings, which these evil times have produced.

There is a moderation, sometimes, which betrays, and which is as unbecoming as the want of it is at others.

If when our venerated pastors and friends are treated as if they were the worst of felons, we imitate the modern *Tartuffes*, and meet their calumniators with a smile, and a placid and serene countenance, we shall be thought to be pleased or indifferent rather than indignant.

It is from the scriptures, that we are to learn what ought to be our behaviour in such cases. Even our Lord and master always adapted his language to the persons and the case. When he had occasion to speak of the scribes and Pharisees of *his* day, he scruples not to treat them as they deserve.

There was something in their spirit very much like that of the *Review* in question.

Do men believe, that the race of scribes and Pharisees has failed? or do they imagine, that they are not at this day as deserving of the censure of our Saviour, as their predecessors in Jerusalem?

What condemnation would our Saviour pass on those men, who make his gospel a cloak to cover, while they gratify the most unholy passions?

This must be my defence. I have no personal feeling towards these accusers. The greater part of them I never saw. I judge of them only by their fruits; and by their fruits I should say, that I have no wish to know them more. It should be recollected, that it is the cause of laymen that I defend, against an attempt to control the freedom of their opinions, and their right of selecting their pastors.

CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

TO LAYMEN OF ALL SECTS.

MY BRETHREN,

It is impossible that you should have read with attention the history of the church of Christ, without being deeply impressed with the conviction, that human passions are never so strong, and the powers of reasoning never so much perverted, as when employed upon the controverted points of religion. It is true, that this is the most momentous of all concerns; but it is as true, that the interests of christianity cannot be promoted by a temper, which that religion expressly condemns, and the opposite to which forms its most distinguished glory and praise. Whether this vehemence, injustice and intolerance, this *odium theologicum*, which have marked, while they have impeded and injured, the progress of christianity in all ages, (at least since the apostolical influence ceased to operate) are to be attributed to the shelter and security which men feel in the indulgence of unworthy passions, under the specious cloak of conscience, or whether these bigots (for there have been such on all sides) are really more transported beyond the bounds of moderation on this topick, than on any other, I leave to others more versed in the human character to decide.

This however we all know, that the over zealous leaders on theological questions have been generally ambitious and intriguing men. They have acted in all times, as if their own glory and advancement, and not those of religion, were the objects of their pursuit.

We cannot review the state of religious controversy in Massachusetts, and the recent clamours which have been excited against certain pastors and certain tenets, without recollecting, what we know to be the fact, that for many years, Dr. Morse, and those who have chosen to identify their cause with his character and views, knew as well as they now do, that many of the Boston clergy held opinions opposed to those of Calvin, and in conformity with the simple doctrines which our Saviour himself taught. They knew also, that these opinions were generally prevalent among the laity in their parishes. Yet, during all this period, Dr. Morse courted their friendship, and held an intimate intercourse with the men he now denounces as heretical. It was not till after his ambitious views on the college were defeated, and till most of the parishes in Boston felt a repugnance to his introduction into their pulpits, on various grounds, that he became an open assailant.

We naturally ask, is it possible that the great body of intelligent laymen in Connecticut and Massachusetts can countenance an attempt to invade the rights of conscience, originating in the ignoble passions of aspiring and intriguing men? Can they believe, that a great part of the citizens of the metropolis of New England will be driven from their faith by threats and insults, as impotent as they are unbecoming?

Could a German monk, like Luther, encounter the power and brave the resentment of such a potentate as Charles the V. and do they believe that we are to be awed into

silence, or frowned into submission, by a few intolerant and assuming men ?

No. Our opinions are too firmly rooted, and our knowledge of our rights too deeply settled, to permit them to form such hopes. But the friends of christianity have more interesting considerations to weigh. Whether they consider us as orthodox or hereticks, still they know we make open profession of christianity. We support it as far as we are able by our morals and manners, our publick professions, contributions and zeal.

They should recollect, that our country presents a motley mixture of atheists, deists, and sectarians of all shades and all opinions.

Surely, in such a state of things, it cannot be deemed advantageous to the cause of christianity, to engage in a crusade against men, who are among the most pacifick and sincere friends of christianity, whose example, influence, and exertions are uniformly directed to its support and extension, and whose greatest crime is, that they have shewn an indisposition to proselytism.

If our faith be as heretical as is pretended, it cannot be for the interest of those, who call themselves the only wise and sound part, the orthodox, to give us the zeal, the form, and consistency of party.

We are all well aware, what were the hopes entertained and the designs formed by a few bigots, who have calumniated our teachers, and attempted to undermine their influence by arts, which would be a reproach to *any* cause, and which are scandalous in one of so solemn a nature.

They hoped, that the cry of heresy would operate like the spiritual thunders of the Vatican. Like Paul IV, they intended to revive the spirit of persecution of another age, forgetting, like him, that the day of spiritual tyranny had gone by, and that the thunder would be heard, like the mimick artillery of the stage.

If I were a zealot in favour of liberal christianity, which I am far from being, if I wished to see it extended and triumphant, I should say, "Persecute us, compel us to exert our talents, to take the form and assume the spirit of a party. Undeified and uncorrupted christianity, so long restrained by civil power in other countries, might then spread. Become a sect and distinction, it would soon have all the energy which belongs to other sects." But this is against our principles. We wish it to make the silent but sure progress, which truth will always make, as knowledge and virtue extend themselves.

As to the zeal which is now displayed in favour of Calvinism, you must all be sensible, that it is not greater than that, which so long supported, and still supports the worst doctrines of the Romish church.

It is not comparable to the ardour and sincerity of those, who in the days which the orthodox call so enlightened, persecuted the persons charged with sorcery.

Yet we well know, that after the delusion of the moment had past away, men saw none of those open interferences of the devil, none of those supernatural agencies, which so long deceived a fanatical people, and the belief of which, to the disgrace of our nation, found its way even into the sanctuaries of justice. So too, we would fain hope and sincerely believe, that when the present infatuation shall have subsided, we shall not find men placing religion in those miraculous conversions which afford such *consolatory* matter for the Panoplist. Strange consolation indeed! wonderful perversion of human reason! to exult over the unhappy victims of deluded fanaticism!

Not a year passes over our heads, in which there are not many persons of amiable and susceptible feelings, driven by mistaken views of God and religion, to the desperation of suicide. I count not the thousands who suffer tortures

produced by a melancholy which neither amends the heart nor purifies the life, while it renders the subjects of the malady useless to society, and a burden to themselves. Such are the frequent fruits of a doctrine derogatory to God, and wholly unfounded in scripture ! Laymen naturally take simpler views of religion, than those who are involved in the subtleties of scholastick divinity.

We ask not, what may possibly be the construction of an obscure passage in scripture, written in a language sufficiently, but at best imperfectly, understood, addressed to men who had particular prejudices, which it was the object of the apostles to overcome ; we rather ask for distinct and intelligible rules, for facts, for narrative, for examples. We search the scriptures in vain for precedents of those gloomy conversions, which are now represented as the only sure tests of regeneration and acceptance with God. Were the catechumens, or newly converted christians, required to shew such a morbid and melancholy state of mind, as are at this day considered the proofs of the gracious interference of God ? No. Is there a case of suicide produced by the picture given by the apostles of the attributes of God ? Not one. It is not more true that the doctrines taught by our Saviour did not produce these bitter fruits which the tree of Calvinism brings forth, than it is, that we seldom see this sudden conversion, or this morbid melancholy, among the conspicuous leaders and teachers of these doctrines. No. The penance belongs altogether to the laity. The chief duty of the spiritual fathers is to preserve their authority, and extend the influence of their body. Hence we have seen in our day a new creation ; extended associations with indefinite powers. A new “society of Jesus” with more than one Loyola at its head.

People who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history will not smile at the idea of this new combination. The

Panoplist may ridicule as much as it pleases the suggestion that they aim at Ecclesiastical tyranny. We perceive from their spirit, that the power only is wanting.

These new associations, if not watched and made the objects of jealousy, will soon become tremendous engines in the hands of skilful and ambitious men. The Roman pontiff who dethroned monarchs, and brought the emperours of Europe to his feet, was only the simple successour of St. Peter, who walked barefooted to Rome, and fell a martyr to his faith, in that city where his successour sat enthroned in purple.

At this moment, the general associations, though created with the view of forcing conformity to Calvinism, and extirpating heresy, appear very harmless. They terminate in pleasant tours at free cost: much respect and good cheer to the *delegates*.

If the end should be defeated, the reward is felt in the honour and distinction of those employed. If succesful, and heresy should be put down; if they can force the inhabitants of opulent towns to reject their beloved pastors, much fame will attend the labourers, and some solid rewards.

Laymen in general, I fear, have not noticed this alarming inroad on our ecclesiastical constitution. A new form of government has been introduced, without the authority of the people or the state. For nearly two hundred years the discipline of our churches rested on the Cambridge platform. There were no general associations, no ecclesiastical assemblies which arrogated to themselves the right of settling matters of faith. All these things were regulated by councils either mutual or ex parte, called for each particular case. The general convention of Congregational ministers never assumed to itself supervisory, or legislative, or judicial powers. If any publick body had a right to assume them, certainly that body had.

Suddenly we find rising up, associations in every state, to which only one party are invited, and these again are strengthened by similar associations through almost all the northern states.

To what valuable or even honourable end these societies can be directed, it is difficult to perceive; but that they may have the most pernicious effects on the rights and liberties of the citizens in matters of faith we can all see.

The authority of general councils, and of the Roman see, took its rise in commencements infinitely more feeble.

Once established and acquiesced in, they might proceed as the associations in Connecticut have sometimes done, to separate a parish and its pastor, where they were perfectly harmonious; and to strip a clergyman of his sacerdotal character, for being faithful to his master.

At present, however, the scheme appears to us as absurd and quixotick as it is bold and unjustifiable.

A set of men, surrounded with enemies in their own camp, with Methodists, and Baptists, and Universalists, scarcely able to meet their parochial and domestick foes, combine to carry their spiritual arms into the territories of their natural allies, the liberal christians; allies who, attached to christianity on principle, convinced of its truth, zealous for its propagation, but determined that it shall not suffer by a misrepresentation of its principles, have no other end in view, than union and harmony in the christian church, and the liberty of worshipping God conformably to what they believe the scripture rules.

Although, from necessity, I have used general terms when speaking of the orthodox, because such terms were assumed by Dr. Worcester and the editors of the Panoplist, yet I do not contend (as they do) with regard to Unitarians, that all the persons, who agree with them on some points, are responsible for all their opinions or unfair proceedings.

I rejoice to believe that the greater part of the Calvinists, or the orthodox, or the true christians, (or whatever other name they may choose to assume,) disapprove the very improper, uncharitable measures, adopted by these persons who have undertaken to speak in their name.

I would fain believe, nay, I do verily believe, that there are not ten clergymen in this state, who do not in their hearts condemn the shameful article in the Panoplist, and the violent and indecent measures taken to bring about a theological quarrel. If I am mistaken in this, I shall be compelled to withdraw much of the respect I yet have for the Calvinistick clergy.

I am aware that it may be said by the orthodox, we consider your opinions as heretical, we view them as hostile to the essential doctrines of christianity, and that we are as much bound to oppose them as the attacks of avowed unbelievers. But it should be recollected that this is the same language which was employed by the Catholicks in opposition to the Reformers. If these gentlemen are sincere in this opinion, let them adopt the only course which the principles of the reformation admit. Let them attack these heresies, if they deem them such, by argument, not by associations. Names and numbers have no tendency, in such an age as this to enforce the belief of opinions which must depend on argument and fact. Let them assert the doctrine of the infallibility of the early reformers, and shew, that they arrived at once from the the darkest superstition and the most absurd opinions, to the most perfect light—that they possessed the gift of inspiration, and that to their opinions full and implicit faith is due.

But surely the course which has been adopted is not consonant to fair reasoning, or the spirit of the gospel. It cannot be reputable for any sect to set forward the most audacious and least respected of their party, to overwhelm their adversaries with abuse and calumny. To place at

their head, men in whom neither party have confidence. Let them rather select the ablest and purest, and meekest persons of their party, and depute them to display and defend their doctrines in a temperate and rational manner. It is by force of reasoning alone that christianity has made its principal progress in the world. It is one of its most powerful arguments and supports in opposition to Mahometanism and other false religions, that it has not generally employed the sword, but has relied on its intrinsick merit for its support.

This principle ought not to be deserted in cases of dissension as to the more minute doctrines of the gospel. To use the weapons of scurrility and abuse on this most solemn subject, to excite the worst passions of mankind, and more especially to form combinations to put down free inquiry and excite odium against those who hold opinions differing from ours, would argue a spirit little less hostile than the expedient of the darker ages, the condemnation of hereticks to the stake.

We therefore hope, that all parties will unite in condemning this illiberal spirit. That there will be a common consent to denounce, as unworthy of the cause of Christ, such publications as the Review in the Panoplist, and that the orthodox will with one voice agree to advise Dr. Worcester, to adopt a course in some small degree consonant to the spirit of the gospel, and to the enlightened age which it has pleased God to permit us to enjoy. In a struggle to elicit truth, to establish the fundamental articles of christianity, we engage that the liberal clergy will not shrink from their share of the labour, and we pledge ourselves, from our knowledge of them, that they will not be outdone in zeal for christianity, in efforts to draw from the rich mines of literature and biblical learning the means of informing the minds, and settling the faith of christians.

A LAYMAN.

NOTE.

I HAVE said, that I could not condescend to notice the scurrilous attacks of the Panoplist on the revered head of our University.

There seemed to be something so base, in setting "children" to watch the exercises on publick occasions, and collecting "respectable gentlemen from different parts of the American union" to act as inquisitors upon the occasion, that I could not persuade myself, that such measures would produce any other sensation than contempt.

But as I have an opportunity of shewing the temper with which the Panoplist is conducted, and the means which it has adopted to cast an odium on the college, I think I ought not to omit it. It was stated in the Panoplist that Dr. Kirkland had written "a letter of consolation and encouragement to the new Unitarian church in Philadelphia."

We presumed this must have been true. We could not have believed that any clergyman would have dared to suggest such a thing without evidence.

It seems, however, from the evidence we are now to exhibit, that it was *not true*.

One of the gentlemen who officiate in that church having seen the Panoplist, of his own accord wrote in a letter to his friend in Boston, the original of which is now before me, as follows :

"I perceive he, Dr. Kirkland, is accused of having written a letter of consolation and encouragement to the new Unitarian church in Philadelphia.

"Had the fact been so, there is nothing to call forth any censure, as not a word of the letter is even quoted : but the truth is, no such letter was ever written.

"I have made strict inquiry, and find that there was a letter written by Dr. Kirkland to Mr. Vaughan, in answer to some queries as to the terms of admission and tuition at Cambridge, and the rules of the college, and this, or a non-entity, must be the letter of encouragement and consolation, which we, like our apostle Belsham, have been complaisant enough to publish, by shewing it to some of our orthodox friends. "Our apostle Belsham," with whom we have neither intercourse nor correspondence, and to whose creed, as set forth in the Panoplist, I hazard nothing in saying not one of us would assent.

"I should like if it were possible, to put such a man as the writer of the article in the *Panoplist* to the blush, to ask him when this letter was written, to whom it was addressed, who was made acquainted with its contents, and what it really did contain.

"After so gross a falsehood, the strictures on the prayers of the President can only deceive those who are resolved to support what they call orthodoxy at the expense of truth and consistency. Perhaps it may not be amiss to mention the fact now stated. You well know my situation in our church, and that if any letter of consolation had been sent from so respectable a quarter as the above, I could not have been kept in ignorance either of its contents or existence. You also know that we have never been in a situation to need consolation. Among ourselves we have had uninterrupted harmony, and all the calumnies and denunciations of 'the pious,' the 'orthodox,' and the 'evangelical' have been unheeded."

NOTE 2.

After the foregoing remarks were put to the press, I received the last number of the *Panoplist*, which contains the proceedings of one of the new grand associations, to which I have referred, and whose object is now more distinctly developed, than it has heretofore been. It is too late for me to enter into the consideration of the deep project which is now laid open, to break down the constitution, by which the churches of this state have been governed for more than a century and an half. It will require a separate and more enlarged examination than I can possibly give to it in the present stage of my essay. I have no doubt that it will excite such feelings as will call forth the ablest champions of the rights of the church.

This project, though covered by as much art and sophistry, as has ever been displayed by men aiming at secret encroachments on the rights of others, is simply this, under colour of enforcing and amending, to abrogate and annul, the Cambridge platform, which has been the rule of discipline, and palladium of our religious liberties, from the earliest settlement of our country, and to substitute in its place a new ecclesiastical tribunal, unknown to our ancestors, and subversive of our religious rights.

To give it some degree of respect from antiquity, an obsolete manuscript of Dr. Cotton Mather has been drawn forth from the rubbish of the last century, and is now attempted to be imposed upon the christian churches of this state as the rule of their government. Even these gentlemen did not venture on their own popularity to hazard such an innovation and revolution in

the church. Even *they* are constrained to admit that it was so odious in Massachusetts, in 1706, when it was proposed, "that there were some considerable persons among the *ministers*, (even in *that day*) as well as *of the brethren*, who thought the *liberties of particular churches* to be in danger of being *limited and infringed* by them. In deference to these, the proposals were never prosecuted beyond the bounds of *mere proposals*."

In other words, they did not dare *attempt* to carry the proposals into effect, at a time when religious liberty was less understood, and the rights of conscience less valued than at this moment.

And why did they not? Because the proposals go to the utter abolition of the right of churches to govern themselves.

They confer the right on ecclesiastical councils, to put any church out of the pale of christian communion. They confer the right on these councils, not chosen by the parties, to refuse ordination, and to depose any clergyman, even against the consent of any member of *his own church and parish*. The reservation of not extending the power beyond the churches who may join this confederacy, against the liberties of the people, we know how to appreciate, by the conduct of the Tolland association.

We are however encouraged to accept it, by the suggestion that Connecticut did at that day adopt it. Yes, she did, and we have seen its fruits. The recommendation in brief is, that Massachusetts shall abolish her religious charter, and conform her discipline to that of Connecticut, though she nobly refused so to do, one hundred years ago.

I am pleased to see, that the association had not sufficient indiscretion to recommend this project for immediate adoption. I flatter myself that the greater part of them disapprove it. If adopted, it will prove a fatal blow to the influence and standing of the Congregational clergy. The forcing through such a plan, in derogation of our present church constitution, and tending to destroy the only check which laymen now have on ecclesiastical usurpation, I am afraid would be the signal of commotions in the church, which would only end in the utter destruction of Congregational churches and discipline. This is no idle fear. It is solemn conviction. Many are the hours which most distinguished laymen have spent, and great have been their exertions, to stem that torrent of innovation and opposition to the regular clergy, which for twenty years has threatened to undermine the feeble props which they still enjoy under the constitution.

But if the minority feel that they are to be oppressed, if revolutions are to be set on foot by those whom the laity have laboured to protect, they must suppose them to be more than

men, if they continue to offer themselves as a rampart to protect those who are labouring to destroy their dearest rights.

It would be easy to shew, and it will be shewn, that this project is also a direct violation of the constitution, laws, and liberties of Massachusetts. Men can make any associations they please, but they cannot give them the smallest practical efficacy or power without the aid of the government. If they invite that government to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs, and to regulate the discipline or faith of churches, they will soon find, that they have entered a path beset with thorns, from which they may in vain wish to extricate themselves. Abolish the Cambridge Platform and the Congregational churches will soon be found on a tempestuous sea, without compass, or rudder, or pilots. The courts of law will however protect the people against such usurpations.

We ask, if such a plan was deemed proper, why did they not submit it to the Convention of Ministers in Massachusetts, to whom it was first submitted by Mr. Mather?

Why ask the consent of a body unknown to our laws and usages, a body self created, and naturally liable to suspicion, as it excludes all who differ from it in articles of faith?

Such proceedings must and will excite distrust. They furnish a new proof, that clergymen are too apt to neglect the most useful study, that of mankind, although their chief object ought to be to know them thoroughly, in order to be useful to them in their ministry. It will not tend to render the new scheme more acceptable to the publick, that its arrangement was confided to those who do not enjoy much of the publick confidence.—The project appears to have been formed, and is subscribed, only by Jedidiah Morse of Connecticut. It is worthy of consideration, whether there should not be a covenant instantly formed by the friends of religious freedom, and of the Cambridge Platform, for its defence against all schemes of innovation, and a publick convention of laity and clergy of those opinions, called to adopt measures to counteract this conspiracy against the church and its ancient rights.

The foregoing strictures were principally written and in the press, at a time when it was supposed that Mr. Channing would not reply to such a letter as Dr. Worcester's. Had it been known that Mr. Channing would have undertaken his own justification, many of the foregoing remarks would have been suppressed as unnecessary.





